

REMARKS

Applicants thank the Examiner for the thorough consideration given the present application. Claims 1-5 and 7-20 are currently being prosecuted. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider the rejections in view of the Amendments and Remarks as set forth hereinbelow.

ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER

Applicants thank the Examiner for allowing claims 9-20 and indicating claims 6-8 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. In light of this indication, independent claim 1 has been amended to include the subject matter recited in dependent claim 6. Accordingly, the rejections of the claims noted in the Office Action are moot and the pending claims are allowable.

In addition, it is respectfully requested this Amendment be entered as it places the application in condition for allowance.

REQUEST FOR INTERVIEW

If the Examiner has any questions with regard to this application, he/she is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned so that an interview can be arranged in connection with this application.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above remarks, it is believed that the claims clearly distinguish over the patents relied on by the Examiner, either alone or in combination.

Since the remaining patents cited by the Examiner have not been utilized to reject the claims, but to merely show the state of the art, no comment need be made with respect thereto.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, reconsideration of the rejections and allowance of all of the claims are respectfully requested.

All of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding rejections and that they be withdrawn. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and as such, the present application is in condition for allowance.

If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (703) 205-8000 in the Washington, D.C. area.

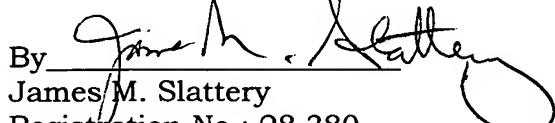
Application No. 10/727,501
Amendment dated March 28, 2006
Reply to Office Action of January 13, 2006

Docket No.: 1131-0494P
Group Art Unit: 1734
Page 12 of 12

A prompt and favorable consideration of this Amendment is respectfully requested. If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Dated: MARCH 28, 2006

Respectfully submitted,

By 
James M. Slattery
Registration No.: 28,380
BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP
8110 Gatehouse Rd
Suite 100 East
P.O. Box 747
Falls Church, Virginia 22040-0747
(703) 205-8000
Attorney for Applicant